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NSC BRIEFING

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State Department review completed

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CHINESE COMMUNIST BOMBING OF TACHEN ISLANDS

At noon on 1 November, the Chinese Communists hit the Tachen Islands with their first air attack on any Nationalist-held offshore island. With 10 light bombers, four ~~LA-10~~ ^(TU-2) fighters and a total of 10 ~~LA-10~~ ^(TU-2) fighters, four ~~LA-10~~ ^(TU-2) fighters and nine MIG-15 jet fighters and LA-11 bombers bombed and strafed the largest islands in the Tachen group.

According to Taipei Press, Nationalist planes retaliated (on 2 November) by bombing mainland positions and Communist installations on islands off the Chekiang coast. The Communists answered this with a second bombing, this time dropping "a bomb" on Ichang Island, just north of TACHENS.

25X1

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25X1 The Communists may be planning to attempt amphibious landings on the Tachens. [redacted] a Communist "convoy" 25X1

was spotted on 1 November "north of Ichiang," a small islet eight miles northwest of ~~Big~~ ^{WATER} Tachen. Ichiang has been repeatedly shelled from Communist-held Toumen Island in the past several weeks, and was ^{being} ~~being~~ ^{intensively} ~~intensively~~ ^{by both shore and} ~~by both shore and~~ ^{satellite} ~~satellite~~ reportedly shelled ~~by~~ ^{by} naval batteries [redacted]

[redacted]

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Rather than signalling a landing attempt, the Tachen air strike may be the opening of a primarily aerial phase in Communist operations against the islands. Some American advisers believe that the Tachons could be made untenable by strong and continuous air assault. The Peiping regime, with superior air strength in range of the islands, may believe that Nationalist forces can be dislodged without committing ground forces.

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The Chinese Nationalist defense minister gave the American ambassador his "person^{al} opinion" on 1 November that ~~the~~ Nationalist *retaliation* ~~air force "must" retaliate~~ for the Tachens attack. ~~He said that~~ ~~this~~ would "probably" result in an expansion of hostilities, although he hoped it would not, ~~as the Nationalists were not prepared for an~~ ~~expanded conflict.~~ He urged that the U. S. Seventh Fleet put in an appearance around the Tachens with carriers, in order to deter the Communists from expanding the conflict.

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